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ABSTRACT

A literature review revealed little empirical research on forgiveness, suggesting the need for a model of forgiveness. The work of both E. M. Pattison and L. B. Smedes was used as a foundation upon which a model was developed involving a four-stage decision making process. The four stages of forgiveness are awareness, change, interaction, and reconciliation. Movement through the stages is made by four consecutive decisions and can be viewed from either the victim's or the offender's perspective. The four decisions relate to judgment, vulnerability, intimacy, and trust-building. The first stage of awareness requires a decision of judgment about the violation that occurred. In the second stage, the person who is aware of the violation and its effects on the relationship decides whether to take steps to change the relationship. If the decision is made to undo negative effects, the person can move on to stage three where internal processes become dyadic processes. The decision to be intimate is the basis of this interaction stage. After all three decisions have been made constructively for forgiveness, the decision of trust-building can be made and the fourth stage, reconciliation, can occur. If, at stage two, a decision is made not to acknowledge or deal with the violation, a course of false forgiveness is taken, involving the four stages of denial, superficial acceptance, continued hurt, and deterioration of the relationship. Future research on forgiveness should strive to: (1) develop a general definition of forgiveness; (2) explore the developmental aspects of forgiveness, correlations between the failure to forgive and psychopathology, and the role of forgiveness in therapy; and (3) examine the Christian viewpoint of forgiveness. A five-page reference list concludes the document. (NB)

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A MODEL OF FORGIVENESS: THEORY FORMULATIONS AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

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Doctoral Research Paper
for the Degree of Doctor of Psychology

ROSEMEAD SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY

BIOLA UNIVERSITY

KAREN ALEXANDRIA JOHNSON

1986

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A MODEL OF FORGIVENESS: THEORY FORMULATIONS AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

BY

KAREN ALEXANDRIA JOHNSON

A doctoral research paper submitted to
Rosemead School of Psychology
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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La Mirada, California

1986

A MODEL OF FORGIVENESS: THEORY FORMULATION AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract

A model of forgiveness is presented. The interpersonal and intrapsychic elements are delineated within a four-stage structure, centered around a decision making core. Both the one forgiving another (the victim) and the one seeking forgiveness (the offender) go through the same decision making process. Yet, each experiences different feelings and behaviors while moving through the four stages. The four decisions are judgement, vulnerability, intimacy, and trust-building. The four stages of true forgiveness are awareness, change, interaction, and reconciliation. Ways forgiveness fails are also discussed. Falsely offered forgiveness is described as comparing to the above process with the four stages being denial, superficial acceptance, continued hurt, and deterioration of the relationship. Research implications and directions are also discussed.

A Model of Forgiveness: Theory Formulation and Research Implications

The purpose of this paper is to present a model of forgiveness, exploring both the internal and dyadic components of the process of reconciliation. The entire process entails both emotional and spiritual healing of individuals and renewal of a relationship. A review of the literature revealed little empirical research concerning the study of forgiveness. Thus a model seemed a necessary step before any thorough investigation of this concept could be implemented. The complex nature of forgiveness makes research about it very difficult. Yet, forgiveness issues are encountered in many aspects of life. Forgiveness is an active process in the mind and emotions of a wronged person. The person attempts to abolish a moral hindrance to fellowship with the wrongdoer and reestablish the relationship. It means an alteration of not merely behavior but of feeling and inner attitude. "The old tides of affection and confidence which ebbed, must rise again to flow over the offense and cover it out of sight. The fault is swept from our thoughts, its influence on our emotions or actions must end; pardon is illusory on any other terms" (Mackintosh,1927, p. 29).

As it is usually understood, the process of pardon is a concrete matter, having to do with consequences. Webster's New World Dictionary (Guralnik, 1975) defined forgiveness as the "giving up of resentment against or the desire to punish another, to pardon, to overlook an offense, and to cancel a debt" (p. 294). Regardless of the context, the process of forgiveness appears to follow a recognizable and predictable course (Hunter,1978). It is this course that is the object of study in this paper. Smedes (1984) described the forgiveness process

as very complex. It is given slowly, freely, and a little at a time. The process occurs best between people unafraid to face their faults.

There are a number of step or stage theories of forgiveness (Linn & Linn, 1978; Pattison, 1965; Smedes, 1984; Spidell & Liberman,1981; Todd, 1985). Linn and Linn (1978) equated the process of forgiveness to the process of grief, as formulated by Kubler-Ross. The Linns did not present an accurate or clear distinction between grief and forgiveness. Hunter (1978) distinguished the two by pointing out that grief is the mourning of a loss of an object (i.e., internal representation of another person), whereas forgiveness is the working through of an aggressive act or injury by an object. The two processes may intertwine, especially if the relationship is lost due to the injury or accumulation of injuries, or death precedes the working through of unfinished issues left between the two people. Spidell and Liberman (1981) compared the increasing awareness of sin brought by growing moral awareness with the increasing and changing need for forgiveness from God. Todd (1985) discussed confession from a Jungian perspective. She made forgiveness the second stage of confession, but did not define or discuss forgiveness other than it being a human need.

Pattison (1965) formulated seven steps of forgiveness. He developed the concept of ego morality as the basis for the mature manner of dealing with guilt. He presented forgiveness and ego morality as processes spawned from childhood moral development. Smedes (1983a, 1983b, 1984) has written prolifically about the emotional turmoil of this process of recovering from undeserved hurt. His theological and emotional struggles illuminated conflicts which abound in this process.

The forgiveness model revolves around a central four stage decision-making process. No one has examined the forgiveness process using both intrapsychic and interpersonal dynamics. The work of both Pattison and Smedes form the foundation upon which the model in this paper is formulated. The model itself is presented, not as the one and only way in which forgiveness occurs, but as a structural guideline that allows the different elements of forgiveness to be examined, i.e., the nature of the violation, the fear of punishment, the vulnerability of the individual as well as the relationship and the use of restitution in the difficult process of resolution of conflict.

The four stages of forgiveness are (a) awareness, (b) change, (c) interaction, and (d) reconciliation. Movement into the first stage and through the subsequent stages is made by four consecutive decisions and can be viewed from either the victim's or the offender's perspective. They are relevant for (a) judgement, (b) vulnerability, (c) intimacy, and (d) trust building. In the first stage, awareness occurs once the victim or the offender judges that some action by the offender has violated the rules or values of the victim or the relationship. In the second stage, the person who is aware of the violation and its effects on the relationship decides whether to take steps to change the relationship. On the one hand, the decision may be to attempt to undo the negative effects of the violation, thereby changing the relationship positively. On the other hand, the decision may be not to acknowledge or deal with the violation, ignoring or denying the need for change. Forgiveness is not considered necessary and the course of false forgiveness is taken. This will be discussed after the model is presented. If the person has decided that the

conflict can be worked out within the relationship, the person has decided to remain vulnerably connected, even within a painful situation. In the third stage the interaction occurs with each person verbally expressing the emotions, thoughts and decisions which have previously been worked through intrapsychically. This is the stage where the internal processes become dyadic processes. The most ideal form of forgiveness involves both participating in working the hurt through to completion, whatever the outcome. The act of forgiveness begins with either an offer by the victim or plea by the offender. The recipient receives and accepts or rejects it. The fourth stage is entered into by the decision to actively regain the bond of the relationship by rebuilding the trust. The person may choose not to reenter the relationship after forgiveness transpires, thus causing the relationship to begin deteriorating.

In the remainder of this paper, the sparse research that has been done on forgiveness will be reviewed within an organizational structure based on the model presented in this paper. Referring to Figurel now and throughout the paper will clarify this structure. The decisions on forgiveness which both the victim and the offender make, propelling the process forward through the four stages, will be examined in the first section. The subsequent two sections will follow the victim and then the offender through the four stage model leading to reconciliation. True or active forgiveness, as explored in the first three sections, will then be contrasted in the fourth section with denying the violation, leading to the process of false forgiveness.

The final section looks at implications for future research on forgiveness in three areas. The model of forgiveness as developed in

this paper should be confirmed empirically. Second, the exploration of the consequences of a person's degree of psychopathology on their ability to engage in the process of forgiveness is an area with little direct empirical confirmation. In the third area, the possibility of empirically studying the attitudes and degrees of maturity in Christian communities where forgiveness as a value is taught is considered.

Decisions

The forgiveness process moves forward by means of a series of decisions. Each decision elicits a set of subsequent emotional and behavioral responses. The decision process is not usually a conscious one. The purpose of delineating the elements in the following decisions is to make explicit what is usually implicit. If these decisions become conscious, the potential for successful forgiveness is greater.

The process of giving and receiving forgiveness requires mutual decisions based on priorities and commitments which transcend the act that brought about the estrangement. The decisions do not necessarily need to occur at the same time in both individuals. At any stage, the process may be aborted by either person, especially when the person denies current feelings or responsibility for the continuation of the process. False forgiveness is a process that occurs when the need of forgiveness is denied continually yet unconscious retaliation is still played out, causing continued hurt which leads to the deterioration of the relationship. One or both individuals may choose this route. If one of the individuals continually refuses to engage in the process, the other resolves the hurt and the relationship's new parameters alone within themselves.

In the process of forgiveness, authors have rarely discriminated between the one who forgives and the one seeking forgiveness. The line may be an artificial one at best. The processes examined here presuppose rather separate routes. Yet forgiveness is, ideally, a mutually dyadic process. Empathy is a key part of the process for both the victim and the offender. Smedes (1983a), from the victim's point of view, stated, "I need people who hurt and hate as I do. I need to struggle before I come through forgivingly" (p. 25). People forgive as they are forgiven. Smedes is referring to a community of people where this struggle is accepted, not denied. Smedes (1983a) described the empathetic process such that anyone who forgave could hardly tell the difference between feeling forgiven and doing the forgiving. "We are such a mixture of sinners and sinned against we cannot forgive people who offend us without feeling that we are set free ourselves" (p. 26). There is a release which occurs for both individuals when reconciliation is achieved. The decisions outlined here display the common ground two people share when forgiveness occurs. All four decisions are made by both the victim and the offender in order for the forgiveness process to move along to a positive resolution. The ease with which these decisions are executed may be based upon the character of the relationship prior to the injury. The prognosis, as in illness, depends on the premorbid condition.

The Decision of Judgement

As shown in Figure 1, the first stage of awareness requires a decision of judgement about the violation that occurred. "Degrees of hurt require degrees of action" (Smedes, 1983b, p. 14). Darby and Schlenker (1982) found that children as young as three years old could

evaluate the need for apologetic action. As they grew older, they were able to distinguish the elements necessary to regain appropriate social interaction such as an apology, attempts at restitution, and a plea for forgiveness. The greater the responsibility and the more adverse the consequences, the greater the need for a more complete apology. Before forgiveness is sought, a determination of what the offense was needs to be assessed. Further, the judgement must also entail deciding that the violation disrupts the relationship or the life of the individual to such a degree that going on as before is not possible. Judgement, at this point, does not act as punishment. It is a courageous step to face a conflict. The positive outcome is to decide that a wrong has been committed based on values which are important to the individual. One common fear is that if forgiveness occurs, the violation is condoned. On the contrary, forgiveness is based on the judgement that a wrong has been done. "To the guilty, forgiveness is amazing grace, to the offended, it sound like outrageous injustice. What is the answer to the unfairness of forgiving? It can only be that forgiving is, after all, a better way to fairness" (Smedes, 1983a, p. 25)[1].

The Decision of Vulnerability

The person must participate and thus share responsibility in the current problem (Augsburger, 1981). To decide to open up to another, in order to heal the wound, requires the courage to be vulnerable to the possibility of future injury. When trust has been broken, emotions are intense. The process could be easily aborted by too quick of an apology, a denial of the intensity of the hurt, or blaming the other angrily, causing defensive, even retaliatory actions. Vulnerability is painfully difficult but very necessary for the process to reach the

second stage, i.e., the choice between constructive love and remorse versus destructive hate and denial.

Peterson (1983) describes conflict resolution as the move toward each other in an effort to mediate a solution. He outlined three steps which make up a conciliatory act. The first is a realization within one or both persons that the maintenance of the relationship is more important than the problem. Second, some sense of personal responsibility must be acknowledged, preferably by both parties, without blaming the other for the conflict. This entails a decision to admit personal responsibility both for the problem as well as the solution. Reciprocal conciliation should follow as the third step. The decision to be vulnerable is based on the commitment that the relationship is worth more than the punishment of the offense. The difficulty of deciding to be vulnerable is eased when it is based on a commitment to the relationship rather then holding on to the need for vindication of the injury.

Intrapsychically, this process requires the ability to hold good and bad together, accepting ambivalence. One must be able to accept oneself or another as having the capacity for both possibilities. Both individuals need to be able to see beyond the act, judged wrong, to the relationship and both people involved. The potential for disappointment as well as for love in that relationship must be accepted. Once the person has worked through the problems and need for vulnerability, only then can intimacy be contemplated.

The Decision for Intimacy

The decision to be intimate is the basis upon which interaction, the third stage, occurs. No one can carry this struggle on alone. The risk of disclosing deep hurt and pain to another person is involved in an intimate interaction. The person moves from the internal decision to be vulnerable to an explicit attempt to disclose intimate feelings of hurt and anger or guilt and remorse. This move is based on the decision to give the other person the opportunity to experience the pain caused by the violation in an intimate interaction. This risk is based on the acceptance and trust that had existed in the relationship.

> Unqualified love is threatening for it highlights the nature of one's inadequacies. . . . Mutual acceptance does not overlook the gravity of the estrangement, nor seek punishment nor use it for self-justification. It is the mutual realization of the I-Thou estrangement and the mutual yearning for reunion (Pattison, 1965, p. 112).

Those who fear intimacy will maintain their defenses and avoid moving into this stage of interaction. The outward manifestation of the feelings and possible losses will be played out interpersonally, in intense detail. The attempt to reach beyond the inner barriers is facilitated by the acceptance felt to be already there in the other person (Carter, 1977). Realistic anxiety aroused by estrangement can be constructive. Pattison (1965) states that this anxiety spurs a person to moral action. Both of these elements, anxiety and acceptance, ride a delicate balance in a person's attempt at making this decision to seek intimate disclosure. The decision entails the conscious purpose not to retaliate but to seek restoration through interaction.

The Decision to Build Trust

The last decision occurs after the other decisions have been made constructively for forgiveness. The process of trust-building is a culmination of these decisions to work for a solution to the problem and to move on to renew the relationship, the final stage. If movement toward trust-building actions on both sides is not forthcoming, forgiveness may occur for the particular incident but the relationship could still remain in jeopardy. An example of this may be in the acceptance of an abusive or alcoholic spouse back into the home who continually promises to change. In such cases, the intent to change may not match the ability to consciously work for trust. Such intrapsychic and interpersonal problems need longer term therapeutic intervention by a third-party.

Forgiving

The decision-making process just described is one which both the victim and the offender move through intrapsychically. Its elements are common to both the individuals, as are the four stages. (Please refer to Figure 1.) The decisions in each stage cause different feelings and behaviors in the victim and the offender. This section will explore these responses in relation to the victim attempting to forgive the offender. To preface this discussion, the nature of the violation will be explored.

The Nature of the Violation

A minor offense can be soothed by an explanation, an apology, or another socially accepted negotiation of a conflict. More serious violations require a more extensive forgiveness process than such simple forms of social negotiations. Brandsma (1982) described a violation as

an omission or commission that causes a person to experience a violation of his or her sense of fairness, in short, an unmet expectation. Smedes (1984) offered three types of offenses that need a more complete forgiveness process. Disloyalty, betrayal, and brutality disrupt bonding, destroying the identity of the relationship. The hurt is deep, personal, and unfair, building walls between the offender and the victim. A disloyal act is one that violates the bond of a vow or a promise, whether public or unspoken, breaking the trust held by that promise. Betrayal is one step beyond the breaking of a trust. It adds shame and humiliation, possibly publicly. "We betray people we belong to whenever we sell them out for a price" (Smedes, 1984, p. 16). Brutality involves the invasion of abuse, either physically or emotionally. It changes the relationship from either benign, such as between strangers, or trusting, as between friends, to that of adversarial. The offender evokes strong feelings of rage or anger, as that of an enemy.

The violation itself is not the most central issue in forgiveness. It is the manner in which the violation is interpreted by the victim and the offender. The violation changes the context of the relationship. The person views the action as a statement of meaning about the relationship or the self. The victim experiences the action as a violation of a value, a need, or a commitment that defined the purpose of the relationship. It is either an unspoken or even unknown expectation, or it was a stated commitment that became disturbed by the action. Protection, the value of the individual, the value in the relationship, trust, need fulfillment, nurturance, and privacy are just some of the many expectations that can be disrupted by the violation.

Although much of this paper dwells on the harmful or negative side of the need for forgiveness, the positive side exists as well. If the violation breaks a bond of expectation that is unhealthy in the relationship, the reworking of those values, as well as a redefining of the relationship becomes a potentially positive outcome. The two people have an opportunity to take a more complete look at each other, at themselves, and at the new possibility of a freshly defined relationship, based on honesty and mercy. So, although this process is difficult and painful, it can potentially yield stronger ties, as well as stronger individuals, who are not afraid to allow their imperfections to be known.

Awareness: The First Stage

The first stage of the forgiveness model has many obstacles. Becoming aware of the pain can be a tremendous conscious effort. The ability to do this may take a fairly well developed ego structure. The need to separate the wrong done from the person who did it necessitates the ability to see people as whole, having both good and bad qualities.

The decisions discussed earlier are usually unconscious, the first signs of their occurrence being the feelings and behaviors exhibited by each individual. Usually the first indication that something is wrong with a relationship is the presence of anger, hurt, or fear of loss within the victim. These feelings trigger a withdrawal from the relationship. In the case of needing to forgive a stranger's wrong, one may withdraw from the situation where the original incident occurred. Within close relationships, the anger or fear may become diffuse, erupting in various inappropriate ways. Pinpointing the anger and its cause requires the work of making conscious the judgement discussed

earlier, deciding what value or right was transgressed. The victim feels unfairly or undeservedly aggressed by a callous or malignant other person. In response, the victim blames the person and feels justified in his or her own retalitory aggression towards the other.

The result of violation is an experience of both frustration and loss. Diminished self-esteem and inadequacy are brought closer to awareness as well as other uncomfortable needs and feelings such as dependency and vulnerability. The usual response is to protect the self. The generation of anger at the violator or offender externalizes the intraspsychic problems which arise. The positive outcome of anger is the generation of energy, a sense of power, protection of the self, and a striving to master or change the situation constructively. It creates distance and boundaries, defining autonomy and values. The negative outcome of anger is when the energy is excessive, generating destructive and retalitory fantasies or actions. The focus is on the offender or turned inward toward the self. Retribution in this manner produces bitterness, unfocused hostility, rigidity of self and relationships and hidden agendas. Trust in others decreases, and hypersensitivity increases. The process becomes self-perpetuating.

The protective response of the wronged individual has rarely been found to include forgiveness. Studies using the Prisoner's Dilemma Game (PDG, Rapaport & Channah, 1965) found that when a person did use a "forgiving" response, sometimes a "relenting" behavior was elicited by the other player. "The effect is admittedly slight" (Rapaport & Channah, 1965, p. 81). They also found that this slight tendency of repentance in the PDG was generally found to decrease with age. Horai, Lindskold, Gahagan, and Tedeschi (1969) stated their skepticism about

the motive to behave in a forgiving manner, saying, "There is a possibility that the subject was willing to cooperate after being exploited because he thought he could thereby encourage the [other] player to cooperate for several trials and thus render the latter vulnerable for later exploitation" (p. 74). Sinha and Sinha (1975) found forgiveness was the least frequently used strategy. Cut-throat competition was most frequently used and had a tendency to perpetuate itself.

A conclusion that may be reached from this body of research, using the PDG, is that forgiveness is not a natural response to conflict. Yet Morgan (1982) found that most people endorsed forgiveness as the number one reason for seeking help in a Christian community. This study, as well as the PDG studies, reflect the high degree of difficulty people have in dealing with conflict and their minimal awareness of how to resolve the dilemma, despite the ability to assess when a wrong has occurred.

Change: The Second Stage

The means to resolving the dilemma begins with awareness. It progresses with an active attempt to grapple with the desparity between the destruction of the violation and the value of the offender and the value of the relationship. The altering of an attitude or change of heart toward the other person is done because the relationship is more important than the offense (Peterson, 1983). The ability to choose to be vulnerable is based on realizing that the aggressor is also good, valued beyond the offense. If no further decision to change the current status of the relationship is made, bitterness sets in and destroys the possibility for future growth both in the relationship and within the

person. The alternative choice, nonvulnerability, causes the bitterness to foster hate. Klein (1975) describes the struggle between love and hate as a primary factor in childhood development. Although the study of psychopathology[2] is outside the scope of this paper, the ability to forgive may depend on a person's psychological ability to draw on cognitive and empathetic resources such as tolerating ambivalence, being able to express painful affect to another, and the ability to control aggressive impluses.

Smedes (1983a) called the second stage of the forgiveness process spiritual surgery. The hurt person's inner response to the wrongdoer is the essential business of forgiveness. The change that occurs disengages the person from the painful act. Brandsma (1982) described the inability to forgive as cognitively assuming or feeling that forgiving condones an action. He related this to refusing to give up self-protective anger. Allowing anger to build "drips acid on defenses and values. This leads to depression and hostility that are destructive to self and others, perpetuating the cycle" (Brandsma, 1982, p. 47). Brandsma described three classes of responses to a violation. (a) retribution, in which escalation of the process occurs; (b) neutrality, in which forgiveness is implied but used as a strategy of indifference to punish; and (c) love, in which acceptance and movement toward a genuine resolution occurrs. The ability to admit dependency on the relationship, to be autonomous, and to give up anger and retribution are all aspects of coming to a decision to be vulnerable and to change the interpersonal stance between the opposed parties.

> To ascertain this truth often requires a humbling of the self to admit dependency or to give up a more or less defensively grandiose aspect of the self. Re-experiencing a hurt in the context of a therapeutic relationship while

> owning one's needs usually heals and broadens the self. The second aspect is to abandon one's egocentric position of only seeing others in terms of one's own needs. Separation rather than fusion is called for. The last aspect is to give up anger with no emotional push for retribution. (Brandsma, 1982, p. 43)

Interaction: The Third Stage

Interaction begins when the internal change from anger to love becomes apparent to the offender. Once love is felt, acceptance is set forth as the groundwork upon which the interaction can proceed. The statement of the victim's feelings and values which were violated are offered to the offender, based on the decision for intimacy. This stage is basically "laying the cards on the table." It requires knowledge of the reason for the hurt feelings, a vulnerable openness regarding the relationship, and a decision to seek intimacy actively. If the confrontation is made with angry accusation, defenses are fostered in both individuals. Mutual acceptance does not overlook the gravity of the estrangement, seek punishment, nor use the interaction for self-justification. It is the mutual realization of the I-Thou estrangement and the mutual yearning for reunion (Pattison, 1965).

Empathy is the most important aspect of the interaction, for both sides. The victim, in order to forgive, shares the guilt, anguish and estrangement of the offender. To forgive is to extend love to the person who violated that love. The process of forgiveness, at this point, requires the one forgiving to be able to reexperience the hurt of the violator from a different perspective. The bridge between the two is forged by empathy. The connection is made by using good and fair communication skills. Personal attacks and blaming disrupts the interaction, causing the offender hurt, spurring defensive retaliation.

Brandsma (1982) found that diminished threat increased the availability of cognitive resources and increased the capacity for empathy. The focus turns from the behavior to the need, value or commitment that was violated within the relationship.

The temptation to demand restitution or payment is a common trap which few can traverse without damaging the forgiveness process. The victim may demand remorse or penitence as restitution, but this actually may constitute retaliation. The victim desires the power of placing the other at his or her mercy, demanding a grovelling plea for forgiveness. Another request for restitution could be a demand for a promise that the act not happen again. Since these demands are based on a need for satisfaction of angry impulses, governing fairness or justice becomes difficult. This may be especially true if much of the feelings of hurt and anger arise from a deeper source of past injuries rather than the immediate situation. The demand for restitution becomes the victim's attempt to repair intrapsychic wounds that have been incurred in the distant past. The crucial element is that no payment or restitution is exacted or given to bring about forgiveness since this is a psychological rather than a legal model. Psychological forgiveness is the restoration of the relationship, not payment for a wrong done. The victim, in attempting to forgive, may tell the offender that if he or she does certain reparative actions, the victim could more easily forgive. The danger lies in the perceived fairness of these conditions. If they are perceived as a means of reestablishing trust rather than punishment, restitution by the offender can be a useful and restorative element in the process of forgiving. If the offender perceives it as

punishment, more damage can occur, causing the cycle of continued repayment of inflicted hurt.

If the offender does not respond to the vulnerability of the one offering forgiveness, the victim will probably feel the need for retribution. Penitence from the offender helps smooth the rough process of being vulnerable, allowing the feeling of forgiveness to be more readily felt by the victim. The interaction stage is obviously facilitated if both victim and offender have worked through the first two stages simultaneously. But this optimum situation rarely exists. Many times, the attempt at interaction in one only begins the process within the other. Patience and continual working through of the above issues must be allowed. If the hurt is deep, the process must be reworked numerous times. It is within the interaction process that the work of forgiveness is enacted. It is the verbal acting out of the internal decisions which have occurred or can immediately occur during the communication. Only then can the offer of forgiveness be made. The offer consists of verbally stating that the other is forgiven.

Reconciliation: The Fourth Stage

Once the offer of forgiveness has been verbally given, the arduous task of rebuilding the relationship begins. Reconciliation begins when the victim, having forgiven, can allow trust to be rebuilt. "The discipline of forgiveness is to give ourselves to others with such openness that they may hurt us. In fact, being human, they probably will hurt us despite themselves. Therefore we must give of ourselves, forgiving in advance the trust they may betray" (Emerson, 1964, p. 44). The ability to trust may be tentative at first, but grows stronger as reliability and stability reenter the relationship. The building of

trust may need to be an active conscious process, based on commitment. Brandsma (1982) outlines two outcomes of forgiveness: (a) commitment not to look for retributive opportunities and (b) a commitment to risk again the possibility of being hurt. The result of the continued interaction is an agreement to work together with the other to see that the relationship is built on fair and just interaction, being more sensitive to each other.

The implication is that both victim and offender are equally responsible for the continued health of the relationship. Rarely is the "victim" entirely without fault in the violation. If the perceived violation is a conflict which escalates into the give and take of many injuries, both are equally victim and offender. The conciliatory act (see above, Peterson, 1983) can be initiated by either one. The relationship is then reconciled on the basis of its own importance, rather than the primary pursuit of correcting perceived injustice.

Once the energy behind resolving the conflict has been spent, "forgetting" can begin. After a period of time, the resolved pain subsides and can be given up. The recurring thought due to daily reminders does not carry the sting of unresolved pain and inclination for retribution. The focus of the two is turned toward the future growth of the relationship. Smedes (1983a) describes this process as the miracle of starting over, the creative violence of love. The process is not complete without forgetting (Hunter, 1978). Forgetting, occurring any earlier within the process, is a denial and thus a refusal to forgive the offense.

Self-forgiveness may be a concurrent aspect of the larger forgiving process:

> Usually at several points in this process (owning projection and needs) the focus can shift to forgiving one's self - for being so stupid, for having unacknowledged needs of such great strength. [This necessitates] reworking one's own self-image into one that is less prideful and probably more human, and hopefully one that is more in tune with a broader internal and external reality. This process of self-forgiveness is implicit to forgiving others and the whole process of living (Brandsma, 1982, p. 45).

The emotional responses and unmet needs tend to widen the gap between the wrong done and the wrong felt. Thus self-forgiveness, although not a primary focus here, cannot be left out as part of the interpersonal process of forgiveness. The victim will come to terms with his or her own failure or wrong in projecting out an expectation that was unfair. The victim changes the perceived wrong expectation to one that is more reasonable for the relationship. This can be done within the interaction. The perceived offender can become the one to forgive.

The continued need to blame and punish or ask for restitution indicates that the act of forgiveness was either falsely or not thoroughly given. "The only outcomes of seeking vengeance are unfulfilled longings for restitution and escalated violence" (Strong, 1977, p. 101). Smedes (1983b) states that the demand for restitution has its root in the need for the offender to feel the pain that they inflicted. "We want them to feel pain" (p. 13). This is retaliation rather then restitution.

The one offering forgiveness thus responds to the inner decision-making process by going through four stages. The awareness of a violation is made when the person feels anger and explores where the source of this anger originates. When the violation is of great magnitude, it stems from disloyality, betrayal, or brutality. The judgement is based upon implicit or explicit value, expectation or

commitment held within the relationship. Awareness brings a change in the attitude towards the offender. If the person continues to value the importance of the relationship, then the victim holds on to the love felt for the other, being vulnerable in the presence of a significant injury. Hate is felt and forgiveness is halted when the person chooses to retaliate rather than to rectify the relationship. The decision to share the pain, creating intimate interaction, may result in the victim's feeling acceptance for the offender and communicating that as well as the values and expectations that were transgressed. If restitution is asked for, the victim does so in order to promote trust, not punishment. The sharing of the anger and the resolve to work the problem through despite the anger usually occurs during the interaction. If a confrontation yielding blame and insults occurs, the victim becomes the offender, starting a new and much more complex process of mutual forgiveness. The stage of reconciliation occurs after the forgiveness has been offered. The process is marked by the giving up of blame, easing into forgetting, and a renewed effort to rebuild the relationship. Trust and a heightened sense of commitment are actively built upon within the awareness of each person's vulnerability for future pain.

Seeking Forgiveness

The previous section followed the process the victim goes through before and after forgiveness is offered, using the four stages outlined in Figure 1. This section will also use the four stages to explore the process through which the offender seeks forgiveness. Although the four decisions and stages may be the same for the offender, the feelings and

behavior can be very different from the forgiving victim. The following section will first deal with the fear of retaliation, then the four stages of awareness, change, interaction, and reconciliation.

The Fear of Retaliation

The offender struggles with facing the truth of the injury knowing that the act causing injury deserves justice. If the offender suspects retaliation, fear and anger may serve as protection. Feeling guilt becomes secondary to emotional survival. Retaliation by the victim is often interchanged with the idea of punishment. The problem becomes equating the amount of damage to the amount of restitution as demanded by objective justice. Retaliation, punishment, and restitution may become confused when the relationship needs reparation. If the victim demands restitution as a condition for offering forgiveness, the offender may perceive this as punishment. Therefore the discussion of punishment is viewed in terms of the interpersonal and intrapsychic consequences rather then punitive payment for damage. The offender may not allow the entire process of forgiveness to begin if he or she fears retaliation, thus protecting him or herself with justification or counterblaming.

Punishment for the act is feared by the offender and sought for by the victim. Punishment is the opposite of forgiveness, yet very much a part of the process. Darby and Schlenker's (1982) study of children found that certain types of transgressions (i.e., with great responsibility, large consequences, aggressive motives) required sterner social judgements and punishments. The punishment was mitigated if the offender was assessed as displaying guilt and offered an apology. Younger children in the study were more oriented toward retaliatory

punishment. As children became older, they were more skilled in their ability to sanction the behaviors of others. Older children were able to reduce amount of punishment if the offender was remorseful about the behavior and judged to be unlikely to repeat the crime. All ages distinguished certain types of transgressions (according to responsibility, consequences, and motive) and demonstrated the ability to adjust their judgements based on the type of apology offered by the offender.

Smedes (1983b) discussed the need for the wrong not to be minimized by the apology offered. If the offender tries to divert the anger of the victim by a quick, painless apology, the reality and depth of the injury are denied. Justification, rationalization, or excusing the action denies the existence that a wrong was done and that the wrong damaged the interpersonal interaction. The offender must see the action through the eyes of the person who was injured. The acceptance of the judgement that the act was damaging and hurtful to the victim is essential in recognizing personal responsibility. Schappes (1980), in his discussion of the Jewish Holocaust, stated that forgiveness can only follow penitence, penance and punishment. "Where justice is so conspicuously absent, can one speak of forgiveness? Forgiveness in ordinary crimes follows pardon for the criminal. Nazism is not penitent. . . [even denying] that there was a crime committed" (p. 67). Smedes (1984) indicated that forgiveness cannot occur outside the realm of justice but must function within its parameters. Pardon can preempt punishment, but as Darby and Schlenker (1982) and Schlenker and Darby (1981) found, the guilt and remorse of the offender are key factors in the decision to give punishment or forgiveness. The offer of

restitution by the offender can be a catalyst for the process of forgiveness.

Awareness: The First Stage

The above discussion attempts to link the sense of guilt to the commission of the harmful act. Two states of awareness are conveyed. The offender either knew of the harmfulness of the act and felt guilty or denied its harmfulness and thus denied personal guilt. In the second state, the wrongfulness of the act is denied and thus the need for forgiveness. Then the process never begins. The unrepentent offender is one who seems to have no regard for the continuation of the relationship, making justification of the act more important than the relationship. Usually this is based on self-preservation needs. The act itself may be a punishment for a past injury, imagined or real, and is thus justified on these grounds. If the relationship is to be reconciled, the work of forgiving must be mutually attempted. Both may only feel safe to disclose guilt and need for the relationship in an atmosphere of acceptance.

A third type of awareness may also be evident. The offender may not have realized that the act transgressed a value, right or commitment of the other until the victim communicates it. Even then, the offender may not judge the act as being wrong or harmful. Guilt may only arise when the offender is aware that the action has hurt the other and the relationship is in jeopardy. The injury to the relationship causes the person to seek reconciliation through the forgiveness process. "The experience of forgiveness implies for the forgiven an awareness of guilt" (Carter, 1977, p. 198). This awareness may need to be spurred by the communication of that hurt by the victim.

This last type of awareness is based on existential ego guilt. The following discussion will briefly outline the various types of guilt. Guilt is a primary factor, whether consciously present or absent. Pattison (1965, 1968, 1969) and Narramore (1984) have extended discussions on this topic. A detailed discussion of the ramifications of guilt, although integral to forgiveness, is beyond the scope of this study. A brief overview of Pattison's work will be given.

Pattison (1968) delineated four types of guilt: (1) civil objective guilt, (2) ontological guilt, (3) psychological subjective guilt-feelings, and (4) existential ego guilt. After the first two are briefly defined, the last two will be discussed in the context of their relationship to the forgiveness process. Civil objective guilt, arbitrary and impersonal, is the violation of objective rules. Justice is meted out by objective authority. Forgiveness can occur only through judicial pardon, a waiving of deserved punishment. Ontological guilt is a theological situation of the human condition in relation to God or perfection. It is a reflection of a person's basic responsibilitiy for his or her life and behavior, "the human condition of inadequacy, ... man's awareness of what he is" (Pattison, 1968, p. 205). This guilt is only dealt with through wrestling with one's own religious convictions, not by resolving interpersonal relationships or intrapsychic conflicts.

Psychological guilt is an affect or feeling. It is the subjective experience of internal condemnation of oneself by one's superego and bears no necessary relationship to reality. This condemnation leads to the anticipation of punishment as the prerequisite of forgiveness. "The superego never forgives, it can only be satiated" (Pattison, 1965, p. 108). Here punishment is not waived, only appeased. Pattison called

this the punitive model of forgiveness. Psychological guilt may be used to screen or hide the other types of guilt. Thus, this guilt may remain stubbornly in place, continuing to seek punishment rather than face estrangement. A person uses restitution as punishment while feeling this type of guilt. Psychotherapy, rather than forgiveness between two people, is the more effective means of dealing with this type of guilt.

Existential ego guilt is the sense of wrongness in the relationship. "This guilt, too, is objective, for it is a condition of estrangement between two persons" (Pattison, 1968, p. 206). It is a denial of values and commitments of the interpersonal situation. To resolve existential ego guilt, the preferred method is not punishment but rather the pursuit of awareness and of understanding how the action violated the valued relationship. It is much easier to pacify the superego rather than to undergo the pain of changing the destructive patterns in the relationship.

> In terms of ego morality, the question is not one of guilt feelings, but rather the assessment of what one is and how one behaves in order that one may modify one's behavior in terms of one's conscious moral commitments. Guilt feelings are of value as signal affects which the ego must assess as to their validity and use as a spur to action. The resolution of a situation where one has violated one's moral commitments is not via punishment but rather via reconciliation. (Pattison, 1968, p. 208, italics mine).

The recognition of personal guilt and responsibility is the prelude to the steps of reestablishing the estranged relationship.

Change: The Second Stage

The offender must grapple with the same issues that victim does, as stated when the second stage of change was discussed in the earlier section. When remorse is experienced, the offender is valuing as important the relationship and the victim as well. Not only is the

offender aware of the estranged relationship but now feels the pain of the offense. Guilt is the state of the offender. Remorse becomes active empathy, suffering for the victim, that can only be experienced when the offender chooses to be vulnerable to the other. The decision to be vulnerable, despite the pain that the offender caused, creates a change in the offender's attitude. The offender actively gives up the hostility that was expressed in the violation, owns his or her own responsbility for the damage and embraces a desire for reconciliation. It begins with contrition, as an objective appraisal of one's state. Remorse then spurs reconstructive action.

If remorse becomes sorrow for being caught, regret, self-pity, self-condemnation to exact sympathy, or continued punitive self-flagellation , no movement beyond this stage can occur. It becomes a self-focused denial of the other's pain and denial of the need for forgiveness by the other for the pain caused. The pain the offender is feeling is not that of the victim, but the feelings of his or her own guilt. Many of the usual responses of denial are used to appease or placate these feelings. Actions such as a plea for understanding, justification in the form of excuses, ignorance (i.e., "I didn't know"), or forgetting function to relieve the offender's pain, rather than the pain of the victim. No responsibility is taken for the damaging action or the consequences to the relationship. This may happen even when the victim has taken the initiative to state the nature of the violation and its harmful effects. The offender, although aware of the action which caused the violation, decides against vulnerability. The person actively seeks self-justification, sometimes even projects the blame and

demands restitution from the victim rather than deal with his or her own objective guilt.

With vulnerability comes an expanded awareness of one's motives and impact on others. The giving up of self-protective anger and other defenses and the turning toward the other in repentance and sorrow facilitates the process for both individuals. Accepting a humbler view of oneself and a more complicated view of reality also results from a genuine move toward intimacy and reconciliation.

Interaction: The Third Stage

The decision for intimacy preceeds the interaction stage. Many authors have defined intimacy as the amount and depth of self-disclosure between two people. Tolstedt and Stokes (1984) found that even when couples were separating, the depth of self-disclosure increased, especially when negative thoughts and feelings were being aired. "The pain and anger associated with loss of an intimate relationship may engender self-disclosures of considerable depth" (Tolstedt & Stokes, 1984, p. 90). This study indicates that, although a person may choose not to continue the relationship, forgiveness of specific events may still potentially be sought through intimate, meaningful interaction.

As the move toward reconciliation continues, interaction may be initiated by the one seeking forgiveness. A few studies have revealed some of the behaviors that occur during a verbal interaction that seeks to remedy a damaging act. Although these studies involve subjects who did not have a prior relationship or just observed or imagined the action requiring judgement, some conclusions can be drawn from them. These studies also illuminate the briefly discussed role of remorse within the process of seeking forgiveness.

Darby and Schlenker (1982) and Schlenker and Darby (1981) studied the use of apologies in social interaction. The behavior of the offender was judged by observers who evaluated the type of punishment or pardon that was delivered. Their definition of apologies was

> admissions of blameworthiness and regret for an undesirable event, e.g. transgression, harmful act, embarrassing incident. From a societal perspective, apologies are social conventions that perform a variety of functions, including serving as recognition that rules have been broken, reaffirming the values of the rules and controlling and regulating social conduct by acknowledging the existence of interpersonal obligations. (Darby & Schlenker, 1982, p. 73)

Apologies are remedial behaviors that attempt to minimize the negative repercussions of the incident and repair the actor's damaged identity. They were seen as strategies for self-preservation. "Apologies split the self into two parts, a 'bad' self that is vilified for the incident and a 'good' self that proclaims a recognition of the misconduct and extends a promise (often implicit) of more acceptable behavior in the future" (Schlenker & Darby, 1981, p. 272)[3].

The number of components in an apology increased with greater responsibility and increased negative consequences of the act (Darby & Schlenker, 1982; Schlenker & Darby, 1981). The components consisted of:

1. Statement of apologetic intent such as "I'm sorry."
2. Expressions of remorse, sorrow, or embarrassement indicating the actor knew of the transgression and felt badly about it.
3. Offers to help the injured party or make restitution in an attempt to redress the damage.
4. Self-castigation, in which the actor disparaged the "bad" self that misbehaved.
5. Direct attempts to obtain forgiveness. (undefined)

Actors who proffered more elaborate apologies (having more of the listed components) were more favorably evaluated by the subjects, i.e., liked more, blamed less, and forgiven more. Actors with bad intentions, i.e., intent to harm, had the opposite effect (Darby & Schlenker, 1982). Although the criteria for relationship and injury are not the same as related in this paper, this study points out that a complete forgiveness process is only required in the most damaging situations.

The above list confirms that a number of the elements in the model presented by this paper are needed for greater inflicted injury, such as remorse, confession, plea for forgiveness, and offer of restitution. These studies do not examine the effects of the deeper injuries due to significant violations that disrupt close relationships, as hypothesized in this paper. These studies are of a description of an observation rather than the measure of the breaking and the healing of interpersonal relationships.

The offering of restitution at this point could be made in order to restore any concrete damage done. An offer of restitution is not necessary but may come out of a need for reparation. Restitution itself cannot heal the rift that has occurred. It can become a catalyst by showing the victim that the remorse and intention to reestablish the relationship is geniune. If restitution is offered as payment to avoid retaliation, then the offender is fearing a punitive form of relating rather than the reestablishment of the functioning relationship. The petition for forgiveness should be made knowing that the giving of it is based on the mercy of the victim, not because payment has been exacted through restitution as punishment.

Both Carter (1977) and Smedes (1984) stated that confession was most real and most helpful if it is specific. Vague confessions feed denial and probably stem from psychological guilt feelings rather than objective guilt. If confession is used to negate or diminish the act, pathology is at work. If confession is used to deny responsibility or state that they were helpless in dealing with "overwhelming reality," then they are hoping to diminish their own responsibility and punishment. Confession can be used as a disarming mechanism so that the other person cannot get angry. Repetitive confession does not relieve guilt and may be obscuring defiant hostility, defending against a deeper attitude or problem within the relationship (Pattison, 1965). It can be a means of diverting attention to a lesser crime or gaining attention from the other person in inappropriate and ineffective ways. If the offender mistakes acceptance as approval, confession is used to relieve the guilt and deny the responsibility rather than to communicate remorse. The inability to confess may mean that the offender is still defensive, having difficulty seeking true intimacy and becoming vulnerable to the pain that has occurred from the violation as well as in the severed relationship. Shifting the blame escalates the process to a damaging confrontation and continues the cycle of the destructive actions.

Confession, at its most efficient and simplest is the statement of responsibility for the wrong done. It is ideally offered without an explanation of the circumstances or a plea for a pardon based on understanding the reason for the action. The explanation may help the victim be more empathetic but should not be given to lessen the guilt of the violation. Understanding the pain of the victim begins with remorse

and can be used for empathy by the offender. Smedes (1983b) described confession as the melting of separate sadness into one. The connection of empathy and hurt between both persons is vital for both the working out of the act of forgiveness as well as successful reconciliation. Confession, for the offender, may act as a cleansing of the guilt as well as empathy for the victim. Todd (1985) described confession as the bridge between the self and the shadow, in the Jungian sense. The offender confronts the "bad" self and accepts the self as whole, fallible and human. The integrity of the personality as well as the relationship can be restored. The need for another person to hear, accept and offer pardon eases the isolation, guilt, and alienation. Confessing the wrong to oneself has little effect.

The offender pleas for forgiveness after confession is made to the victim and, ideally, the victim has worked through his or her own feelings, as discussed in the section on forgiving. The interaction stage is where the two participants can reach the same point, whether or not they began together. The act of forgiveness is completed when the victim offers or the offender pleas for forgiveness and the other accepts the petition.

Reconciliation: The Fourth Stage

If continued relationship is chosen, the offender, now forgiven, and the victim, now the forgiver, must begin the hard task of rebuilding the trust that has been lost. To begin this process, Smedes (1983b) stated that the forgiven offender must promise not to hurt again. This is not promising a fact but stating the "passionate desire not to hurt again." It is a promise of intention rather than a denial of reality. The possibility always exists that hurt inevitably will occur. This is

the risk involved in starting to build trust. But without the promise based on genuine desire, beginning to work toward rebuilding trust cannot begin.

The promise given is twofold. It entails a promise of not repeating the violation and a promise of renewed commitment to the relationship. An act of restitution, given at this time, acts as the first attempt at rebuilding the broken trust. It should encompase repairing only the physical or actual immediate damage. If restitution goes beyond the immediate, then it is a continuing act of punishment, atoning for the guilt of the offender and a retaliation exacted by the victim. The relationship is not being rebuilt on trust. Further acts of trust-building should be for the future of the relationship, not disproportionate atoning for the past.

Two empirical studies have looked at verbal promises and their effect on the forgiveness process using the Prisoner's Dilemma Game. The Prisoner's Dilemma Game presents a mixed-motive situation with cooperative and competitive alternative choices. Cooperative behavior is defined in terms of sharing a goal and working for it with the other individual. Competition is defined as working for a goal individually and blocking the other from attaining that goal. The action which was best for each player separately would, if chosen by both, result in both losing. The strategies of other players influence the subject's tendency to cooperate (Wrightsman & Deaux, 1981). There are numerous strategies outlined in Rapaport and Channah (1965). A forgiving strategy is one of four interpersonal variables that correlates with trust, trustworthiness, and repentence. Forgiveness was defined as a player choosing to continue a cooperative strategy after the last

combination of plays yielded a defection or competitive move by the other player and a cooperative play by the subject (Wrightsman & Deaux, 1981).

Gahagan and Tedeschi (1968) found that trust was engendered not only by communication of promises but of credible promises to change competitive behavior. At medium credibility (i.e., promises were kept at least 50% of the time), subjects responded in a more forgiving manner. They were less forgiving of competitive players. Subjects had higher expectations of cooperative play from those who responded more cooperatively overall.

Horai et al. (1969) found that forgiveness occurred often when the conflict was of low intensity (defined as low consequences) and no messages (communication of promises) occurred between the players. Forgiveness also occurred when the offender's promise to change was credible only 10% of the time and the consequences to the victim were great and damaging. Their conclusion regarding this phenomena was that the subject "forgave" the offense out of desperation, making an effort to "reform" a noncredible source. This may be seen in real life drama by the battered wife, or the spouse of an alcoholic, both of whom forgive and return to the abusive situation. One might justifiably question whether this is in fact forgiveness.

Unfortunately, the internal thoughts, motivations, and feelings were not measured in these two studies. The behavior portrayed by the subjects of the study may or may not have simulated real situations or real forgiveness. But the findings did show that both promises and the reliability of those promises significantly affect the ongoing relationship of the individuals. A wrong is committed, moves are made

to show willingness to cooperate and continue the relationship, and promises are given to help shape the future fruitfulness of the relationship.

In conclusion, forgiveness "assumes love in spite of sinfulness" (Calian, 1981). It is a thoroughly paradoxical event. A forgiven person is both sinful and righteous, wrong yet acceptable. The reality of the injury and the need for justice are not denied. It becomes the means through which relationships between faulty people continue. Forgiveness is a way that love keeps relationships open between people. Because people are incurable sinners, forgiving is ongoing (Schulz, 1974). Forgiveness is an essential process, maintaining the balance between justice and mercy between two people.

True versus False Forgiveness

Just as there are four stages each individual works through in trying to achieve true forgiveness, falsely offered forgiveness may also follow a deteriorating process of stages. (Please refer to Figure 1.) The deterioration of the relationship becomes evident if the decisions are not made consciously as well as truthfully. If each denies the occurrence of the violation, this leads to the denial of the feelings each has concerning the disruption of the relationship as well as the act itself. Instead of leading to a change in attitude toward the other, the individuals portray a superficial acceptance continuing the external guise of the relationship. Since the disruption of the relationship is ignored, each individual continues inflicting hurt. The victim inflicts hurt out of retaliation. The offender continues to violate an already broken trust. Both remain defended and invulnerable, lacking any ability to share feelings of pain deeply. Superficial

sharing of mundane interests becomes a part of the defense against the pain. The deterioration of the relationship seems inevitable, usually occurring over a minor event.

If the relationship continues, it is a dyadic state of willful competitive conspiracy. Anger is nutured by both. Retaliation self-perpetuates the interaction. Retribution can be demanded in both passive and active ways. This is sensed by the violator and escalation occurs (Brandsma, 1982). Vengance replays the hurt repeatedly. No release occurs. "If we do not forgive, the only recourse is revenge, dooming us to repeat it" (Smedes, 1983a, p. 25). Thus the cycle of revenge is established. The tallies are always unequal.

Pattison (1965) described false forgiveness as the punitive model of forgiveness. The resolution of guilt is punishment. The payment of a price is for narcissistic gratification. The driving force is deprivation of love. The failure of forgiving is found in hostile retaliation, condescending gestures of duty, self-righteousness, and rigid legalism. The omnipotent person aspires to perfection. The unforgiving legalist can't accept him or herself or forgive him or herself for being imperfect. Hostility toward others, disguising projected guilt, erupts when they remind him or her of the imperfection of guilt (Pattison, 1965). The opposite reaction of being too forgiving also gratifies personal omnipotence, accenting the feeling of power over the transgressor. Quickly given forgiveness may also deny the other's guilt. Minimizing or ignoring a violation may be a defense against actual anger or the wish for retaliation.

The inability to forgive leaves both individuals in a state of isolation. They have to deal with the destructive elements alone, using

whatever coping mechanisms available to deal with the feelings caused by the violation and by the resulting severed relationship. "The more isolated a person is, the more destructive will be the power of sin over him, and the more deeply he becomes involved in it, and the more disastrous is his isolation. When sin is confessed to a brother, the last stronghold of justification is abandoned" (Bonhoffer, 1954, p. 112).

There is a distinction between false forgiveness and the forgiveness process that has failed. Falsely offered forgiveness such as an "I'm sorry" or other means of brushing over the offense with as minimal pain and involvement as possible, never attempts to deal with either the internal process or the dyadic realities of the consequences of the act. Failed forgiveness usually involves the inability to work through the anger and may signify a problem of internal, historical, psychological injuries. Therapy is better suited for working this out rather than demanding healing from the relationship itself. Therapy may have little impact on false forgiveness if the person is stubbornly embracing denial. Other therapeutic work must be attempted before the working alliance is firm enough to allow the person to see past the denial and deal with the emotional hurt.

Research Implications

There has been very little empirical research done in the area of forgiveness. The type of research that has been done has not used a consistent definition or methodology. None have studied forgiveness within the context of close relationships, as described here. There are three areas in which the study of forgiveness could be directed: (a)

developing a general definition of forgiveness; (b) exploring the developmental aspects of forgiveness and exploring the correlations between the inability or failure to forgive with different degrees of psychopathology, as well as the role of forgiveness in the process and outcome of therapy; and (c) looking at the Christian viewpoint, correlating the teaching of forgiveness and the degree of maturity or health found in Christians holding beliefs valuing forgiveness. The following will briefly discuss what has been done and what directions would be appropriate for the future.

The general studies concerning definition, congruence between behavior and values, and the study of the occurrence of forgiveness in relationships could then be pulled together to formulate an empirically grounded forgiveness theory.

Little has been done to attempt to empirically define forgiveness or the process of reconciling relationships. Questions should focus on individual and dyadic perceptions and practice of forgiveness. As most of the empirical research in social psychology has found, forgiveness is a rare occurrence. The Prisoner's Dilemna Game (PDG) studies generally concluded that people do not act more cooperatively if the other is cooperative on every trial. They learn quickly to be more cooperative if the other player matches their own choices. Cooperation is facilitated if nonthreatening communication is allowed. None of the PDG studies used forgiveness as an independent variable. The difficulty with the findings is that there is no consistent definition of forgiveness that could be generalized to different studies.

The Rokeach Value Survey found forgiveness a significant factor in their results (Rokeach, 1973). Rokeach designed the survey to be used

as an all purpose instrument for research on human values. He reviewed a large body of research, tabulating normative data on the values, such as church denomination, age level, and occupational differences. The subject is given two lists of words, the "instrumental" and the "terminal" values, to rank order, putting the most important first. Terminal or "end-of-existence" list dealt with values held as lifelong personal beliefs. Intrumental value is a moral value governing immediate behavior. It is a mode of conduct that has an interpersonal focus, that, when violated, aroused pangs of conscience, feelings of guilt for wrongdoing or shame about inadequacy (Rokeach, 1973, p. 553). Each value is placed on a list with a brief definition. Forgiveness is part of the instrumental value list. Forgiving was defined as being "willing to pardon others" (Rokeach, 1973). In comparing numerous studies using variations of the PDG and the Rokeach Value Survey, an interesting conflict can be observed. It seemed that although certain populations may value forgiveness in Rokeach's sense, (Gilgen & Cho, 1979), similar populations do not behave in a forgiving manner in the PDG (Horai, Lindskold, Gahagan, & Tedeschi, 1969; Pareek & Dixit, 1974; Sinha & Sinha, 1975; Tedeschi, Hiester, & Gahagan, 1969). No one has done a single study correlating the forgiving behavior of the subjects with valuing forgiveness.

Studying how forgiving behavior affects interpersonal relationships is another direction that research could take. Research on interpersonal interaction is wide ranging. Much has recently been done in the new fields of family therapy and close relationships. Many studies used interpersonal interactions to look at the interpersonal dyad. Interpersonal self-perceptions (Fazio, Effrein, & Falender,

1981), trust (Larzelere & Huston, 1980), self-focus within a dyad (Stephenson & Wicklund, 1984), the nature of love (Sternberg & Grajek, 1984), and judgements of responsibility (Thompson & Kelley, 1981) all look at different aspects of communication and relationship within the dyad. Most of these studies focused on close relationships but none addressed forgiveness. Peterson (1983) did a study on conflict resolution in close relationships that has been summarized briefly earlier in this paper. These new directions in interpersonal interactions should provide tremendous potential for the study of forgiveness within marital or close relationships.

A second area of study could focus on developmental aspects of the forgiveness process. As the Darby and Schlenker (1982) study confirmed, the ability to discern the need for forgiveness increases with age. Pattison (1969) found that children demonstrated little correlation between what they are taught in church and their behavior. Further study could focus on correlating different aspects of teaching moral values and the incorporation of them into interpersonal behavior. Research could take two directions, focusing on naturally occuring forgiving behavior and the change in this behavior once the process of forgiveness is taught.

Much of the model presented above necessitates a mature ability to view others as whole, imperfect people, being both good and bad. Pattison (1965) and Hunter (1978) also equated emotional maturity with increased success in the ability to forgive. Hunter (1978) gleaned much of his formulation from the psychoanalyses of patients in the terminal phases of successful analysis. If the above model is used as a framework, questions regarding the failure of forgiveness at certain

junctures could focus on clinically and possibly diagnostically relevant material. If, for example, a person has difficulty with intimacy or vulnerability, further exploration of past relationships may illuminate why forgiveness now has failed. The sociopath who does not experience guilt may not be able to perceive an interpersonal violation. The narcissist may also have difficulty moving beyond the intrapsychic injury to the vulnerable state of empathizing with the other's pain. Borderlines may also have difficulty working through the process because of their inability to deal with ambivalence or the threat of abandonment.

Numerous authors have speculated on the role of psychotherapy in the process of forgiveness. Brandsma (1982) stated that psychotherapy must label the cognitive and behavioral elements of conflict. Then the client is allowed to reexperience the hurt and anger felt and help the patient understand his or her own needs and projections in the situation. Pattison (1965) stated that therapy is the facilitating environment where the state of forgiveness is waiting. Hunter (1978) stated that psychotherapy provides a nonjudgemental acceptance model for the patient, reinforcing good introjects, thereby facilitating the forgiving attitude. In successful therapy, marked reduction of bitterness and resentment toward persons held responsible for the patient's suffering occurs. They have a less egocentric or narcissistic view of the world. They have an increased capacity to form new object relationships or modify old ones. Improved reality testing allows the self and others to appear more clearly separated and the interpersonal relationship is more realistically assessed. Many research questions could be addressed in the realm of psychopathology and psychotherapy.

One may be to clarify how different psychological theories define the dynamic of forgiveness, using different terminology. The role of forgiveness in the process and outcome of therapy is also a question that may prove fruitful. Morgan (1982) has done a limited study on the importance of forgiveness as a salient issue of people in a Christian community seeking help from numerous sources, such as friends, pastors, or professionals. More work is warranted in this area, since his study has limited generalizability. Further questions could encompass whether the actual process of forgiveness enhances or promotes growth in the individual and interpersonal relationship.

The third area where research is needed is the role of forgiveness in the church. The forgiveness of sin is a major tenet of Christianity. Stone (1982) used this as a means of defining his population for studying self-actualization and religious experiences. He found that Christians tended to decrease in self-actualizing behavior after conversion (being forgiven by Christ). Pattison (1969) found that Christian belief is highly correlated with antihumanitarianism, authoritarian personality, increased degrees of interpersonal hostility, and punitive social attitudes. Wilson (1972) and Schulz (1974), on the contrary, found that strong religious faith and the holding of values that pertain to that faith has a beneficial effect on the mental health of an individual. Spidell and Liberman (1981) theorized that from the perspective of moral development, forgiveness can be perceived as a process, with each stage bringing greater awareness of the scope of sin. To accommodate this expanding realization, the person reinterprets his or her relationship to God and others. Emerson (1964) found a positive correlation between a person's deep understanding of forgiveness and

that person's performance on tests indicating good emotional adjustment. He studied differences between denominations. His results may be easily challenged due to poor validity and reliability of the method and tests he used. Also, the definition of forgiveness was vague and nonspecific, using undefined religious terms. Therefore, more current work in the area of correlating Christian belief and behavior may yield more useful results. Morgan (1982) did find that Christians did seek help from the church for problems with forgiveness. Sixty-five to 75% of Morgan's (1982) subjects experienced prayer and forgiveness as problem areas. Does the understanding and practice of forgiveness increase the health of close relationships? Has this occurred in churches where forgiveness is highly valued? Data on these kinds of questions would be a useful contribution of research on forgiveness within the Christian community.

Many authors have used forgiveness to differentiate between so called Christian and secular counseling techniques. McAllister (1983), Sexton and Maddock (1978), Strong (1977), and Wilson (1974) have adapted Christian principles to psychotherapy, strongly emphasizing the role of forgiveness. Wilson (1974) studied the effect of a strong Christian therapeutic approach (i.e., salvation, confession, repentence, forgiveness, teaching or reinforcing Christian values, introduction to selected Christian churches or groups). Using 20 of his own patients, 17 patients spoke of forgiveness by the end of therapy, as measured by clinical judgement. Due to the quasi-experimental design, i.e., subjects did not come from a randomized population, the results have limited generalizability. Obviously, the need to assess the importance of forgiveness in therapy, as presented from a Christian perspective, needs more study.

The avenues of study that have been used are varied and most have been weak methodologically. The use of the Rokeach Value Survey (Rokeach, 1973) is simple, economical, easy to administer, reliable and valid, but does not focus exclusively on forgiveness. It also does not measure interpersonal dynamics. The Prisoner's Dilemma Game method of study usually looked at interpersonal behavior in superficial relationships. The problem is that the state of the art of measurement has not reached a point where the intrapsychic and interactional characteristics are easily measured. Paper and pencil tests such as questionnaires and surveys do not capture the complexity of the interpersonal interaction, the pain or the growth involved in the disruption and healing of a violation.

Yet, for the development of a paradigm or the study of developmental failure, testing individual subjects is more relevant. The developmental aspects of the research may be studied using correlations between ego development measures, personality ratings (Rozsnafszky, 1981) and questionaires on forgiveness.

Research possiblities lie in the newly developing field of family research. Thompson and Walker (1982) and Huston and Robins (1982) explored the conceptual and methodological issues in defining and measuring relationships. Following their outline could bring consistency to the measurement of the dyadic interaction. The movement is toward understanding relationships from the dyadic as well as the individual perspective. Using this framework, the study of forgiveness may be cut loose from its one dimensional moorings.

Conclusion

The process of forgiveness using the four stage model is an attempt at describing a complex and difficult journey. The balance between justice and mercy versus retaliation and denial of the pain are tremendous obstacles on the path of any close relationship. The model in this paper is a means of teasing out the many difficult facets a person faces once the inevitable action happens between two people that threatens to alter a previously peaceful existence. The model attempts to draw together the intrapsychic and interpersonal dynamics of reconciliation. Although the process is not simple, I will attempt to give a simple recap. The victim wrestles with feelings of hurt, anger and fear, tempted with responses of retaliation and bitterness. The offender must deal also deal with anger as well as guilt and remorse for the damage caused to the relationship. If the victim can come to the point of acceptance of the offender, believing that good can survive the damage done, then the person can state their needs and feelings vulnerably, attempting an intimate interaction rather than confronting in anger, causing the offender to protect him or herself defensively. If the offender does feel the acceptance and also desires the relationship to continue postively, he or she is more likely to respond with confession and offer appropriate restitution. Both then begin the task of rebuilding the trust that was lost. The failure to forgive has also been examined for each individual. True forgiveness, where the individual makes an effort to work through the painful process, was contrasted to falsely offered forgiveness. False forgiveness usually promotes a destructive cycle that could eventually destroy the relationship. A person falsely forgives by denying the meaning of the

offense, offering superficial acceptance, unconsciously or covertly continuing the hurt cycle, and allowing the destructive deterioration of the relationship.

Empirical studies relevant to forgiveness have barely scratched the surface. More research is needed as the field of marital and family therapy gain prominence. The need to understand relationships is an interest that nearly everyone shares. Hopefully, this discourse on forgiveness will be of constructive use to those who read it, if not from agreement with the position stated here, then through challenging these ideas. Both draw us into looking at our own values and beliefs about our relationships, thus starting the whole process with increased awareness.

Footnotes

1. Some who seek forgiveness for minor events may have pervasive guilt and will not find relief asking for forgiveness. The problem may lie at a deeper level of intrapsychic conflict. In Schlenker and Darby (1982), subjects took tests assessing individual differences. Although only a footnote to their study, they found that those subjects with the greatest need for approval seemed to be most hungry for forgiveness.

2. An example of this is: If a violation is felt as a narcissistic wound, i.e., an attack wounding the self, hate most probably occurs and the possibility of further resolution may be stopped.

3. The need for apology between a offender and the victim can be deduced at a very young age. Children as young as three were able to distinguish among transgression situations by whether or not an actor apologized. Young children demonstrated a reasonably mature set of reactions to criteria supposed to be important in assessing transgressions, i.e., greater responsibility required more complete apologies (Darby & Schlenker, 1982). This points out the possible link to the capacity of forgiveness in the developmental process.

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